

January 18, 2006

Dear Community Friends:



Reporting Crime to the Police

One of the cornerstones of the critical things law enforcement needs to know - and the cornerstone of Block Watch – is reporting suspicious activity to police and informing each other of the activity as well. So when *do* you call 9-1-1, and what can you expect when you call? Here's a run-down.

Call 9-1-1 when:

- When you have a Police, Fire or Medical emergency.
- To report a crime that is in progress, or has just occurred.
- There is a situation that could, or does, pose a danger to life, property, or both.
- There is suspicious activity involving a Person(s), or Vehicle, that appears criminal in intent.

Please Note: Seattle Police 9-1-1 operators have immediate access to interpreters, who can assist them in communicating with callers, and TTY machines at every station. Also, If you are reporting an emergency occurring in another city (i.e. you are talking with a family member in Everett and they start having a heart attack) call 9-1-1 and to be transferred to the appropriate jurisdiction.

9-1-1 calls from pay phones and cell phones are free.

The Seattle Police Non Emergency Line: (206) 625-5011

Reasons for calling the non-emergency number include, but are not limited to the following:

- You want to report a nuisance, such as a noise or parking complaint.
- To report a non-emergency crime, one that did not just occur, and the suspect(s) are not in the immediate area.
- You have questions about something suspicious occurring in your neighborhood, and you are not sure it is criminal activity.

What To Expect When You Call:

Try to remain patient and calm while the 9-1-1 operator asks you questions. They are trained to ask specific questions to quickly determine what is wrong and what

type of assistance to send. Please stay on the line until the operator tells you to hang up.

What Police Need To Know

Be prepared to answer these questions:

- **Is it an emergency?** Using the previous definitions, if the situation is not an emergency, please tell that to the operator up front.
- **Your EXACT location:** This may not always be the same as where the activity is occurring, but *from where you are calling*.
- **The location of the activity:** If you don't have an exact location, give us the best location you can (near the intersection of Smith Ave. & Jones St.)
- **Time lapse:** Our response can be based on whether the crime happened five minutes ago, five hours ago, or is currently in progress.
- **The exact activity you are reporting**
- **Suspect Information:** Any information you can provide clothing, height, weight, age, direction of travel, etc. will be helpful to the responding officer(s).
- **Weapon information.** Are there any weapons involved? What type?

Phone Reports

With some crime reporting, you may be asked if you are willing to do a phone report rather than having an officer respond. This frees the officers to respond to other emergency calls.

Note: If you need/want an officer to respond to your location, call 9-1-1 and request an officer response.

We'll cover more about crime reporting and suspicious activity in upcoming newsletters

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention